

*NCA Self Study*  
*Criterion 4 Documents*

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Eastern Illinois University

*Year* 2014

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Syllabus Policy and Learning Goals  
Update

Council on Academic Affairs

This paper is posted at The Keep.  
[http://thekeep.eiu.edu/eiunca\\_assessment\\_docs/73](http://thekeep.eiu.edu/eiunca_assessment_docs/73)

## **CAA/Learning Goals Year 1 Recap, Year 2 Preview**

### **Recap of Year 1 (2013-2014) “Reinvigorating the University’s Learning Goals”**

#### Learning Goal Efforts

- In the Fall of 2013, the Learning Goal committees consisting of 28 faculty, 3 staff, and 2 student members made revisions to the proposed undergraduate learning goals based on campus feedback and in the Spring 2014 CAA voted to adopt the revised undergraduate learning goals.
- Throughout the fall and early spring, learning goal committee members researched and synthesized information and resources related to instruction and assessment of each learning goal. A newsletter for each learning goal was developed as well as summaries of key resources and “best practice” evidence.
- In the spring each learning goal group in collaboration with Faculty Development presented a 2-hour workshop which was recorded and streamed as a continuing campus resource. Each learning goal group began brain-storming additional resources that could be developed next year when the focus is on learning goals in the general education curriculum. Learning goal committees also began discussing benchmarks and learning expectations within the learning goals that would build on Common Core and be accomplished within the general education curriculum.

#### CAA Processes Work

- Collaborated with members from CGS, Faculty Senate, and Registrar’s Office on
  - revising, simplifying, and clarifying CAA Course Proposal Form to support systematic inclusion of the university learning goals in all new and revised courses;
  - examining higher education syllabus best practices; and then revising the CAA syllabus policy; and
  - studying and revising the credit hour policy to be more explicitly in compliance with federal guidelines.

#### Communication/Transparency for Campus

- Learning Goals Website <http://www.eiu.edu/learninggoals/>
- Meeting summaries
- Updates/ meetings with Faculty Senate, Admin Councils, College Curriculum Committees
- Newsletters

### **Transitioning to Year 2- Summer Symposium (See attachment)**

- Developed a General Education Symposium in which 25 Learning Goal leaders, CAA members, and General Education Instructors met for 9 hours over 4 days in June 2014 to discuss
  - Clarifying purposes of General Education (discussed/debated relative focus on learning goals and exposure to knowledge and inquiry in broad array of disciplines)
  - Designing Curriculum (discussed course sequences, early requirements, debated merits of gen ed spread throughout 4 years or as foundational to major. Suggestions received about linked courses/interdisciplinary courses. Discussed senior vs sophomore gen ed capstone. Discussed number of learning goals that might be reasonable for each Gen Ed

course to address – after discussion 2 ½ was consensus. LG leaders initial suggestion after meeting)

- Teaching Practices to Support Student Achievement in General Education
- Assuring Student Learning Goal Achievement in General Education (discussed AACU rubrics, DQP, suggestions made about learning portfolios, external accountability,
- Defining Academic Rigor (see attachment for draft resulting from meeting/discussion)

## **Year 2 (2014-2015) Plans- The Learning Goals and General Education**

- Syllabus policy (distributed to chairs spring 2014, email to all faculty Aug 2014)
- New Faculty Orientation (8/20/14)
- Meetings with Admin Councils, College Curriculum Committees, Faculty Senate

### Learning Goal Committees (Currently Recruiting)

- Benchmark learning goal expectations by sophomore and senior years, building on Common Core and taking into account AACU rubrics, Illinois Articulation Initiative, and Degree Qualification Profile 2.0 guides.
- Develop resources for learning goal instruction and evaluation within general education courses
- Discuss common vocabulary to aid in transfer of skills
- Give input to CAA/Gen Ed committee about characteristics of courses (e.g. Writing Intensive, Speaking Intensive, Quantitative)
- Develop workshops and consult with faculty and departments in planning Gen Ed course revisions

### General Education Committee (CAA Members, Learning Goal Reps, Gen Ed Segment Reps) (Currently Recruiting)

- Review/Discuss EIU's mission of Gen Ed
  - Compare to IAI/other universities
  - Update catalog information about mission/purpose of General Education if needed
- Discuss Survey Results and Current Practices at EIU
- Discuss expectations for Gen Ed courses
  - Number of learning goals addressed
  - Disciplinary content and learning goal instruction and assessment
  - Rigor
- Develop processes for initial revision of gen ed courses
  - Schedule
  - Consulting process and resources
- Discuss curricular requirements (segments and semester hour requirements to remain the same)
  - Sequences (e.g not allow math class end of program)
  - Senior sem vs sophomore sem
- Discuss possibility of a cycle for future review of gen ed courses
  - Number of years
  - Process (including data?)

**University Learning Goals in General Education Symposium**  
**June 9, 10, 11, 12 (10:30 am – 12:45 pm)**  
**Location Mon, Tues & Wed -Rathskellar Loft in basement of MLK Union**  
**Thursday- Oakland room, 3<sup>rd</sup> floor MLK Union**

EIU's Council on Academic Affairs' is engaged in a multiyear effort aimed at "improving student learning outcomes at the university through systemic increase in academic rigor and improvement of curricular, instructional, and assessment practices in both the general education and major programs." During 2014-15, CAA will focus specifically on the role of general education in developing students' foundational skills in the university learning goals: critical thinking, writing, reading, speaking, listening, quantitative reasoning, and responsible citizenship.

|  | Suggested Reading   | Other Resources  |
|--|---|--|
| <p><b><u>Day 1 (June 9) – Clarifying the Purposes of General Education at EIU</u></b></p> <p>In the general education program, how should we:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Expose each student to knowledge and means of inquiry in a broad array of disciplines?</li> <li>Foster "habits of mind" that encourage students to become responsible citizens, critical consumers of information, ethical decision makers, and life-long learners;</li> <li>Establish strong foundations in critical thinking, reading/writing, speaking/listening, and quantitative reasoning?</li> </ul> | <p>Gaston (2010). General Education &amp; Liberal Learning: Principles of Effective Practice. Chapters 1,2, 3</p> <p>EIU Gen Ed in Catalog</p> <p>EIU Learning Goals</p>  | <p>LEAP Curricular Design Principles</p>   |
| <p><b><u>Day 2 (June 10) – Assuring Student Learning Goal Achievement in General Education</u></b></p> <p>In the general education program, how should we:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Define, at the university level, "general education proficiency" in each learning goal?</li> <li>Raise performance expectations and support student achievement of these expectations?</li> <li>Translate proficiency descriptions into course assignments to assess student learning?</li> <li>Create activities, assignments, and assessments that support student achievement?</li> </ul>   | <p>Gaston (2010). General Education &amp; Liberal Learning: Principles of Effective Practice. Chapters 4,5</p> <p>Bok (2006). Our Underachieving Colleges: A Candid Look at How Much Students Learning and Why They Should Be Learning More.</p> <p>Chapter 5 Learning to Think</p> | <p>Bok (2006)</p> <p>Ch 7 Preparing for Citizenship</p> <p>Ch 8 Living with Diversity</p> <p>Ch 9 Preparing for a Global Society</p> |
| <p><b><u>Day 3 (June 11) – Teaching to Support Student Achievement in General Education</u></b></p>  | <p>Gaston (2010). General Education &amp; Liberal Learning: Principles of</p>   |  |

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|---|---|--|
| <p>In the general education program, how should we:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase course rigor to promote student engagement and learning (and meet federal credit hour policy)?</li> <li>• Explicitly teach learning goal skills using disciplinary course content as a vehicle?</li> <li>• Employ learning goal skill vocabulary to promote transfer of skills to other courses?</li> </ul> | <p>Effective Practice. Chapters 6</p> <p>EIU Credit Hour Policy</p>   |  |
| <p><b><u>Day 4 (June 12) – Designing Curriculum in General Education</u></b></p> <p>In the general education program, how should we:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Incorporate high school exit standards and IAI requirements to promote articulation?</li> <li>• Promote greater consistency of curriculum across courses with multiple sections?</li> </ul>   | <p>Gaston (2010). General Education &amp; Liberal Learning: Principles of Effective Practice. Chapter 7</p> <p>Illinois Articulation Initiative (IAI) Gen Ed</p> <p>Common Core Exit Standards</p> <p>Degree Qualifications Profile</p> |  |

### **Academic Rigor (Draft definition from June Summer Symposium)**

The term **rigor** is used to describe instruction, coursework, learning experiences, and educational expectations that are intellectually challenging. Rigorous learning experiences help students understand knowledge and concepts that are new or foreign to them, complex, ambiguous, or contentious, and they help students acquire skills (e.g. oral and written communication, quantitative reasoning, critical thinking, ethical decision making) that can be applied in a variety of educational, career, and civic contexts throughout their lives.<sup>1</sup>

Components of academic rigor often include high level critical thinking and problem solving skills; high but clear standards and expectations; course workload that engages student in meaningful preparation and purposeful learning outside of class meetings; and teaching that covers in-depth subject matter ideas, using and transforming students' prior knowledge, and supporting learning through scaffolding .

Rigorous learning activities and assignments encourage students to think critically, creatively, and more flexibly; to question their assumptions and analyze, synthesize, and evaluate readings and other course material; to formulate arguments and counterarguments using strong evidence; to interpret data, to solve real-world complex problems and explain the logic or the principles underlying the solutions; to draw conclusions and defend positions/answers or creative choices; to explain decisions and consider alternative perspectives (rather than merely demand memorization and information recall).

Rigorous learning environments are stimulating, engaging, and supportive. Students are encouraged to take risks, be active learners, work hard to meet high expectations, and make modifications and revisions based on feedback/constructive criticism.

<sup>1</sup> <http://edglossary.org/rigor/> "The Glossary of Education Reform for Journalists, Parents, and Community Members"

## 2013-2014 Learning Goal Members

### Speaking/Listening

Rich Jones  
Stacey Ruholl  
Misty Rhoads  
Kathryn English (student)  
Caroline Simpson

### Quantitative Reasoning

Wesley Allen  
Alejandra Alvarado  
Marita Gronnvoll  
Mary Konkle  
Michael Menze  
Kevin Savage (student)  
Krishna Thomas  
Larry White

### Writing/Reading

Tim Taylor  
Luke Steinke  
Lora Green  
Teri Hunt  
Mike Bradd  
Angela Anthony

### Critical Thinking

Jill Fahy  
Richard England  
Bill Addison  
Andy Methven  
Kirstin Duffin  
Dagni Bredesen  
Kai Hung  
Danelle Larson

### Responsible Citizenship

Debra Reid  
Karla Sanders  
Anita Sego  
Rachel Fisher  
Carrie Johnson  
Melinda Mueller

### Summer 2014 Symposium Participants

Rebecca Throneburg  
Stephen Lucas  
Jill Fahy  
Tim Taylor  
Rich Jones  
Wesley Allan  
Deb Reid  
Karla Sanders  
Angela Anthony  
Marita Gronnvoll  
Richard England  
Stephen Canfield  
Jonelle DePetro  
Mike Cornebise  
Lora Green  
Danelle Larson  
Mary Caroline Simpson  
Paul Kory  
Don Holly  
Michael Gillespie  
Jeff Stowell  
Mike Mulvaney  
Jeannie Ludlow  
Rick Wilkinson  
Fern Kory